

Message Text

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42

ACTION EUR-12

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CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05

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FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1070

INFO AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY NICOSIA

USMISSION NATO

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 6942

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PFOR, IT, GR, TU, CY, EEC, NATO

SUBJECT: GREEK FOREIGN MINISTER VISITS ROME

1. FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIAL RESPONSIBLE FOR GREEK AFFAIRS (FRANCHETTI), HAS PROVIDED EMBASSY WITH RUN DOWN OF HIGHLIGHTS OF ROME VISIT MAY 8-10 OF GREEK FOREIGN MINISTER BISSIOS. IN ADDITION TO MEETING SENIOR ITALIAN OFFICIALS, BITSIOS ALSO MADE A CALL ON POPE PAUL.

2. ITALIANS FOUND BITSIOS GENERALLY PESSIMISTIC ABOUT PROSPECTS OF RESOLVING CYPRUS DISPUTE. BITSIOS EXPRESSED DISAPPOINTMENT OVER LACK OF PROGRESS OF RECENT INTER-COMMUNAL TALKS HELD IN VIENNA UNDER UN AUSPICES, AND HE CRITICIZED TURKISH PLANS TO HOLD A REFERENDUM ON A CONSTITUTION FOR THE TURKISH ZONE ON MAY 18. ACCORDING TO BITSIOS, TENTATIVE AGREEMENT HAD BEEN REACHED FOR HIM TO MEET WITH HIS TURKISH COUNTERPART ON THAT DATE BUT THE REFERENDUM, IF HELD, WILL
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MAKE THAT IMPOSSIBLE. ON THE OTHER HAND, BITSIOS BELIEVES

IT LIKELY THAT GREEK AND TURKISH PRIME MINISTERS WILL MEET IN BRUSSELS AT THE END OF MAY IN CONNECTION WITH THE FORTHCOMING NATO SUMMIT. IN TALKING ABOUT ARCHBISHOP MAKARIOS, THE GREEK FOREIGN MINISTER OBSERVED THAT MAKARIOS HAD APPARENTLY COME AWAY FROM HIS RECENT WASHINGTON VISIT WITH A SUBSTANTIALLY LESS HOSTILE STANCE TOWARDS THE UNITED STATES.

3. BITSIOS INDICATED THAT NEITHER THE GREEKS NOR THE TURKS FELT IT POSSIBLE TO RESOLVE BOTH THE CYPRUS AND AEGEAN QUESTIONS AS PART OF ONE PACKAGE. HE STRESSED THE GREEK POSITION THAT EACH QUESTION IS INDEPENDENT AND WILL REQUIRE ITS OWN COMPROMISES BY BOTH SIDES IF RESOLUTIONS ARE TO BE FOUND. ON THE AEGEAN QUESTION, BITSIOS EXPRESSED A GREEK WILLINGNESS TO AT LEAST DISCUSS SUCH SUBJECTS AS TERRITORIAL WATERS AND EXPLOITATION OF THE CONTINENTAL SHELF.

4. BITSIOS PRESSED THE ITALIANS HARD FOR SUPPORT IN GREEK EFFORTS TO ACHIEVE FULL MEMBERSHIP IN THE COMMON MARKET. THE ITALIANS NOTED THAT IT WAS NOT A BILATERAL QUESTION BUT RATHER ONE WHICH HAD TO BE DEALT WITH AMONG THE NINE IN BRUSSELS. THEY ALSO CAUTIONED THE GREEKS THAT COMMON MARKET MEMBERSHIP IS NO SUBSTITUTE FOR NATO.

5. CONCERNING NATO, OUR SOURCE OBSERVED THAT IT DID NOT FIGURE PROMINENTLY IN THE DISCUSSIONS. NEVERTHELESS, THE ITALIANS CAME AWAY FROM THEIR TALKS WITH BITSIOS FEELING THAT THE GREEKS ARE PROCEEDING IN A PRUDENT MANNER AND REALIZE THE CONSEQUENCES THAT PRECIPITOUS ACTION COULD HAVE.

6. SUBSEQUENT TO PREPARATION OF ABOVE, WE RECEIVED AP REPORT OF ANNOUNCEMENT FROM ANKARA OF MEETING BETWEEN TURKISH AND GREEK FOREIGN MINISTERS IN ROME BEGINNING MAY 17. MFA OFFICIALS HAVE INFORMED US OF TELEPHONE CALL AT 1400 HOURS LOCAL MAY 13 FROM ATHENS INFORMING THE ITALIANS OF THE MEETING. ACCORDING TO THE ITALIANS THE AGENDA FOR THE MEETING "DOES NOT DIRECTLY CONCERN CYPRUS" BUT RATHER HAS THE AEGEAN PROBLEM AS THE MAIN POINT OF DISCUSSION. AT PRESENT THE SESSIONS ARE SCHEDULED TO ALTERNATE BETWEEN THE GREEK AND TURKISH EMBASSY, WITHOUT ITALIAN PARTICIPATION, ALTHOUGH THE ITALIANS HAVE OFFERED THE USE OF THE FOREIGN MINISTRY'S VILLA.VOLPE

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